

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE STATE ADVISORY COUNCIL ON  
PALLIATIVE CARE AND QUALITY OF LIFE  
November 5, 2021**

Alabama Department of Public Health (ADPH)  
The RSA Tower, Suite 1586  
Montgomery, Alabama

**Members Present**

Karen Marlowe, Pharm.D., Co-Chair  
Kristi A. Acker, D.N.P.  
Gregory W. Ayers, M.D. (teleconference)  
Leigh Ann Matthews, M.S.N. (teleconference)  
Timothy Mayhall, M.Div.

**Members Absent**

Rodney O. Tucker, M.D., M.M.M., Chair  
John G. Beard, M.B.A.  
Richard J. Brockman, J.D.  
John P. Miller, M.D.  
Mary Ann Somers, M.A.Ed.

**Staff Present**

Michele Jones, M.S., Chief of Staff  
P. Brian Hale, J.D., Deputy General Counsel  
Jacqueline Milledge, Bureau of Health Provider Standards (BHPS) (teleconference)  
LaKesha Hopkins, BHPS  
Lisa Pezent, BHPS (teleconference)  
Kierra Montgomery, BHPS (teleconference)

**Guests Present**

Angie Cameron Smith (Proxy for Richard J. Brockman)  
Sarah Peterson (Proxy for Stormy Dismuke) (teleconference)

**CONSIDERATION OF THE MINUTES OF AUGUST 20, 2021:**

The Council recommended approval of the minutes of the August 20, 2021, meeting as distributed; the motion carried unanimously.

**COVID-19 UPDATE STATEWIDE STATUS:**

Ms. Michele Jones provided an update on the statewide status of COVID-19, stating the hospitalizations, deaths, and reported cases have declined. The Pfizer vaccine has been approved for children ages 5-11 and only federal pharmacies have it in supply. A new pill for COVID-19 called molnupiravir is waiting for interim guidance and will be in limited supply.

Ms. Jones also stated that in the past month, all the virus cases have been the Delta variant. There have been 2.45 million doses of the vaccine administered in the state of Alabama and

2.1 million individuals have completed the vaccine series. Pfizer also has a new pill that is in the authorization process.

### **OPIOID PRESCRIBING AND REGULATION UPDATES:**

Dr. Gregory Ayers informed the Council that some physicians have been having difficulty during the audit process because they failed to register as a pain clinic provider. Hospice physicians are exempt. Currently, there is not an exemption for board certified Palliative Care physicians. Dr. Ayers proposed to the Council to send a letter to the Board of Medical Examiners for the exemption.

### **COVID-19 IMPACT ON PALLIATIVE CARE AND HOSPICE PATIENTS:**

The Council members provided an update on the affects COVID-19 is having on their industries. Limited oxygen, medical supplies, price inflation, and limited staff have been the current problems. The Council also discussed the vaccine mandates and the affects it has on each industry.

### **SURROGATE DECISION MAKER AND NOTARY REQUIREMENT UPDATE:**

Dr. Ayers made a motion to remove the notarization requirement from the Surrogate Decision Maker Form; the motion carried unanimously and will be sent to the State Committee of Public Health.

### **MEMBER TERMS AND ELECTION OF CHAIR AND CO-CHAIR:**

Dr. Gregory Ayers made a motion to provide Dr. Rodney Tucker with a commendation for his years of service as Chair of the Council; the motion carried unanimously.

Dr. Ayers nominated Dr. Marlowe to continue as Co-Chair; the motion carried unanimously. Ms. Angie Cameron-Smith nominated Dr. Kristi Acker as Chair; the motion carried unanimously.

### **OTHER ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION:**

The meeting dates of the Council for next year are February 11, 2022, May 13, 2022, August 12, 2022, and November 18, 2022.

The Council discussed the need to fill seat vacancies for Pediatric Palliative Care and the Specialty of Social Work. Mr. Mayhall stated that he will be nominating a candidate for the Specialty of Social Work.

Dr. Marlowe asked the Council to review Act 2015-207. She also asked the Council to review the website to ensure all resources and links are up to date and accurate.

The National Physician Orders for Life Sustaining Treatment Form will be a standing item on the agenda next year.

**NEXT MEETING DATE:**

The next meeting of the Council is scheduled for February 11, 2022.

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Karen Marlowe, Pharm.D., Co-Chair  
State Advisory Council on Palliative Care and Quality of Life

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Jacqueline D. Milledge, Acting Director  
Bureau of Health Provider Standards  
Alabama Department of Public Health

Approved February 11, 2022